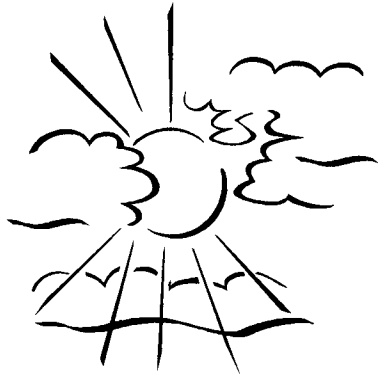


***Department  
of  
Human  
Services***

Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
Communications  
(517) 373-7394



\*Important story at this spot

# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Monday, December 5, 2005**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
*Welfare Reform	2-12
*Day Care	13-16
Health Care	17-24
*Child Support	25-29
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	30-32
211	33-34
Food Assistance	35-39
*Foster Care	40
Energy Assistance	41-43
Domestic Violence	44-45
Vulnerable Adults	46-48
Adoption	49
Fraud	50
Charities	51-62
Obituary	63

Saturday, December 03, 2005

## **Michigan lawmakers approve limiting welfare, increasing penalties**

### **Cash help limited to 4 years for able-bodied recipients; law seeks to provide more education**

By Amy F. Bailey / Associated Press

LANSING -- State lawmakers have voted to limit cash assistance for able-bodied welfare recipients to four years and to implement harsh penalties for those who fail to comply with work or training requirements.

The legislation, if signed by Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm, would be the most significant change to the state's welfare program since former Gov. John Engler overhauled it in the 1990s. The House and Senate on Thursday approved slightly different reforms, but both are intended to provide more education and job skills to welfare recipients, limit benefits and set tougher penalties for failing to comply with requirements.

Backers of the bills want to give welfare recipients more time to get an education and require caseworkers to do a thorough assessment of people when they apply for cash assistance. Those provisions are aimed at helping move people into long-term employment rather than simply putting them in the first available job that pays minimum wage.

"The current system traps people in minimum wage jobs," said Rep. Jerry Kooiman, a Grand Rapids Republican who shepherded the bills through the House. "We need to improve resources, education and training so they can get the good-paying jobs."

The GOP-controlled House voted 64-43, mostly along party lines, to only allow welfare recipients to continue receiving aid after four years if they are disabled or they are taking care of a disabled relative. Able-bodied adults on the welfare rolls for more than four years would get a one-year grace period before possibly losing their aid under the legislation.

Seven Democrats voted for that bill with 57 Republicans. The Democrats were: Kathy Angerer of Dundee, Andy Dillon of Wayne County's Redford Township, John Espinoza of Croswell, Chris Kolb of Ann Arbor, Jeff Mayes of Bay City, Gary McDowell of Rudyard and Dudley Spade of Tipton.

Two representatives missed the vote: Democrat Clarence Phillips of Pontiac and Republican Gary Newell of Saranac.

The Senate, also controlled by Republicans, voted 24-11, mostly along party lines, to approve a four-year limit with slightly more flexibility. It would allow welfare recipients who have followed work and training requirements for four years to apply for a one-year extension.

"This will not leave people high and dry," said Sen. Bill Hardiman, a Kentwood Republican and chairman of the Senate Families and Human Services Committee. "We're trying to keep people from being stuck in a very bad situation, a cycle of dependency."

A four-year limit would affect about 8,100 cases, or about 20,000 individuals, including many children, according to a nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency analysis.

Some lawmakers are concerned about a four-year limit.

"You go ahead and kick them off, you're still going to be taking care of them," said Sen. Shirley Johnson, R-Troy. "Don't sit here and be judgmental."

Johnson was the only Republican to vote against the main Senate bill with 10 Democrats.

Twenty-one Republicans voted for the bill with three Democrats: Dennis Olshove of Warren, Mark Schauer of Battle Creek and Jim Barcia of Bay City. Three Democrats were excused and did not vote: Virgil Bernero of Lansing, Robert Emerson of Flint and Irma Clark-Coleman of Detroit.

Lawmakers are taking up welfare reform because several provisions of the current law sunset at the end of the year. The packages of bills now switch chambers, and lawmakers who support the proposed changes hope to get final versions of the bills to Granholm before the end of the year.

A few House Democrats argued that lawmakers should hold off on major changes to the welfare program until they have more time to consider the effect of the complex legislation.

About 212,000 people currently receive cash assistance, the House Fiscal Agency said. The average monthly payment per household is \$415, or about \$5,000 a year, the agency said.

The House legislation would set up a three-strike policy for failing to comply with work and training requirements. The first offense would mean 30 days without cash assistance, 90 days for a second offense and a lifetime ban for a third offense.

The sanctions in the Senate bills are slightly less harsh: 30 days without cash assistance for a first offense, 60 days for second offense and two years for a third offense.

Rep. Michael Murphy, D-Lansing, criticized the harsh penalties.

"Where's the justice? We're talking about the most vulnerable in our state," he said. "I find this very appalling. I don't believe a word from any of you that this is going to improve the lives of people that we're talking about."

Kooiman, however, argued that the strict sanctions would rarely be used and would help deter people from dangerous behavior.

The welfare bills are House Bills 4121 and 5438-46; Senate Bills 892-94.

**On the Net:**

Michigan Legislature: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

Michigan League for Human Services: <http://www.milhs.org>

Published December 4, 2005  
[ From the Lansing State Journal ]

## **Welfare: Lawmakers' lectures aren't basis for proper aid policy**

A Lansing State Journal editorial

Welfare bills being rushed toward Gov. Jennifer Granholm reflect a disturbing disconnect under Michigan's Capitol dome.

Lawmakers who receive large salaries and elaborate health and pension benefits seem to know what life is like for struggling Michiganians. For some, apparently, it is a life of sloth; of a lack of initiative.

That's why the Legislature wants to impose stricter time limits on welfare aid to adults who can work. The sentiment is prudent. The legislation is not. Granholm should wield the veto pen.

Yes, Michigan, there are people who get state aid who are healthy and "able" to work but aren't. The new rules being pushed by legislators would involve up to 20,000 residents, The Associated Press reports.

Yet, out of those 20,000 are many, many children.

In fact, welfare really isn't about helping adults; it's about helping adults who must care for children.

According to figures drawn from the Web site [publicagenda.org](http://publicagenda.org):

- Children are the most likely group to live in poverty.
- Roughly three out of every four welfare recipients are children.

Meanwhile, Michigan continues to struggle with an anemic economy; a situation putting severe pressure on the least among us. Or did state lawmakers not notice the recent report in the LSJ that showed food stamp use surging across the tri-county area.

In 2000, about 9,500 tri-county residents were using food stamps; in 2005, that number is up to 43,000. This is clear evidence of a weak economy.

Yet, Michigan lawmakers think that if they talk deadlines and a little job training, these layabouts will suddenly get decent jobs?

People who are on welfare for extended periods invariably lack education, job skills or even basic life skills. We can - and should - push more education and more training.

And we can be "tough." But, as state Sen. Shirley Johnson, R-Troy, said, "You go ahead and kick them off, you're still going to be taking care of them."

Monday, December 05, 2005

Detroit News Editorial

## **Consider poor economy before changing welfare Job losses produce increased demands for assistance**

Lawmakers must reconcile welfare reform legislation adopted in both the Michigan House and Senate. With the state mired in recession, this will have to be done with some finesse.

Michigan, along with the rest of the nation, saw significant changes in welfare caseloads after federal welfare reform legislation was adopted in 1996. In addition, the state's prosperous economy added to the reduction in welfare caseloads.

In 1993, there were 229,000 people receiving cash assistance from what used to be called the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, which is funded by both state and federal dollars. By 2000, that number had dropped to 72,000.

But after a slumping state economy has produced several years of job losses, the number of recipients of cash assistance for families, now called the Family Independence Program, has climbed back up to 212,000.

Michigan's welfare laws expire at the end of this year, and state lawmakers in both houses have adopted changes that would encourage people to move off of welfare rolls. Federal law requires that recipients receive cash assistance for no more than 60 months, or five years. But states can exempt up to 20 percent of their caseloads from this requirement and use their own money to pay beneficiaries after the five-year limit.

Both the House and Senate want to decrease the limit for able-bodied adults to receive cash assistance to 48 months, or four years. The Senate version would add another year for special circumstances. Under state and federal reforms, assistance recipients must also work a set number of hours each week while looking for better jobs, or be enrolled in job training, to be eligible for their benefits.

Both sets of bills set up "three strikes and out" provisions for recipients who fail to meet work or education requirements. And the House version requires people receiving Social Security disability payments to subtract that amount from their state benefit.

But the bills also contain carrots as well as sticks. The House version allows recipients to earn more money from any part-time jobs they are working before they lose their benefits and provides literacy training for recipients who have difficulty reading, says State Rep. Jerry Kooiman, R-Grand Rapids.

That's fine, as is the Senate's addition of a year of benefits for recipients under certain circumstances. But using Social Security disability income to reduce a family's state benefit is troublesome. Someone in a family with a disability can impose a real strain on other family members' ability to find and hold jobs.

Welfare benefits shouldn't be permanent. Though the state Human Services Department needs the authority to make demands on recipients, it also needs the flexibility to adjust its requirements to families with special needs or problems. Michigan's welfare program needs to be tough-minded with some, but it also must be fair and humane.

# Welfare Limit

## 4-year rule must have leeway for tough times

December 3, 2005

Detroit Free Press

The Legislature is about to set a lifetime limit of four years for receiving cash-assistance welfare. The provision is not unreasonable, but the timing is lousy, considering the state of the Michigan economy and where it's heading.

So in forging a compromise next week between their different versions of the legislation, the House and Senate need to be careful to take the economy into account and preserve a safety net for the most vulnerable people in the system -- and their children.

Most of the 78,000 people now receiving cash assistance are single mothers with children, according to the state Department of Human Services. A third of them are disabled or the primary caregiver for a disabled family member, and 21% are holding down jobs. They would continue to get help. Estimates are that leaves 10,000 cases, encompassing 20,000 children, subject to review under the 48-month limit.

State Rep. Jerry Kooiman, the Grand Rapids Republican who is guiding the House version of the legislation, said it contains adequate safeguards. He said it was aimed at building deadlines into the system to make sure welfare does what it's supposed to do -- help people become self-sufficient. Kooiman predicted that only a few thousand people would ultimately lose benefits, "people who simply don't want to improve, don't want to work."

Kooiman said he's convinced there are jobs waiting for welfare recipients with the right training and skills.

"Where we are going to be stricter will be in requiring people to get the help they need, the literacy education, the GEDs," he said. "I hope very few people will be forced off (benefits)."

While Kooiman's optimism about jobs is refreshing, there is no guarantee it is warranted and many indications to the contrary. So lawmakers would do well to make sure their exceptions to the 48-month rule include welfare recipients in areas of high unemployment. If, for example, the jobless rate tops the long-term average in a given region, the people on welfare there ought to be able to continue receiving the assistance payments -- which average about \$415 a month -- without their 48-month clock running.

Children should not suffer from their parents' honest inability to land a job, especially when the times are tough for everyone.

# Welfare changes

## Tough reforms justified if aid program complete, fair

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Sunday, December 04, 2005

Toughening Michigan's welfare program, specifically limiting cash assistance for the able-bodied to four years, is justifiable reform if carried out correctly.

To their credit, lawmakers who've pushed this new policy in bills passing the House and Senate appear to have taken into account how hard it will be to get many on welfare into lasting employment.

Equally gratifying is that no one is trying to score political points by denigrating this population, or naively expects that removing some of the 78,000 Michigan households on assistance will immediately save money. Realistically, the mentoring, education and training, assistance with child care and removal of other barriers preventing people from holding jobs might even cost more initially.

But ending dependency for a few thousand families - the apparent objective - would be a huge achievement, as their lives would be immeasurably improved, and the enormous burden society bears because of their predicament would be lightened.

If the Republican-sponsored legislation gains final approval and is signed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm, harsh penalties would visit those who fail to comply with work or training requirements. In fact, the House legislation requires a lifetime banishment from the welfare program after a third offense. Such stern consequences are necessary, say reform proponents, because the current sanction of a 30-day loss of benefits doesn't faze many recipients.

Additionally, the four-year welfare limit both chambers endorsed represents a stark change from present policy, which has no such cap. That makes Michigan a rarity among states, and therefore invites this fix. But it also puts heavy onus on lawmakers to draft fair and workable reforms, as well as on agencies this clientele depends upon.

Chief among these are job-training outfits set up to give welfare recipients essential education and other employability skills. Scrutiny of their performance must be as unforgiving as it is for welfare clients who shrug off state mandates.

Elsewhere, there must be sufficient caseworkers in the state Departments of Human Services and Labor and Economic Growth to create the personal development plans for welfare clients the reform legislation calls for.

Without such mentoring and other basic help, a functionally illiterate person with a spotty job history is probably doomed. The same can be said for these generally thoughtful reforms, which wisely would increase financial rewards for working as opposed to collecting government aid. Further reducing the welfare case load, already more than halved the past decade, is a complicated engineering job, requiring a full understanding of every obstacle involved.

Lawmakers seem to be on the right track, but a wrong turn could derail this journey toward a noble goal.

### QUICK TAKE

Genesee County  
numbers Welfare  
families: 6,618  
Individuals: 17,886  
Cases with adults  
exceeding four  
years on the rolls:  
1,402  
Food stamp cases:  
31,997  
Families on  
Medicaid: 22,649  
Sources: Michigan  
and Genesee  
County  
Departments of  
Human Services



# **Federal cutbacks threaten poor**

## **If Congress has its way, Michigan could lose \$1B for Medicaid, food stamps and other assistance.**

Deb Price / Detroit News Washington Bureau

**WASHINGTON** -- Congress' plan to slash up to \$50 billion from federal programs threatens tens of thousands of Michigan families who receive Medicaid, food stamps and help in collecting child support.

Cutbacks in those three programs alone could mean up to \$1 billion less headed to cash-strapped Michigan over the next five years to help such families, according to the Granholm administration. The cutbacks could force the state to decide whether to throw some needy families off public assistance or raise taxes -- or both.

In addition, farmers face losing price support payments and conservation incentives. And cutbacks in federal interest rate subsidies could make it more difficult and expensive to get a student loan.

Congress' belt-tightening could hurt Michigan residents like Keyte Duncan, 28, of Detroit. The mother of seven children between the ages of 2 and 10 uses food stamps, cash assistance and Medicaid to supplement the \$225 she clears on average each week as a part-time caterer.

"Working isn't enough for me to pay all the bills. I've got rent, light and gas bills. Without help, probably we'd be starving because we couldn't eat much some days," said Duncan, who added she worries about her kids' health -- two of whom have had asthma -- if they were kicked off Medicaid.

The proposed cuts in entitlement programs reflect Congress' need to deal with soaring deficits. Hurricane Katrina strained a federal budget reeling from higher-than-expected bills for the war in Iraq, skyrocketing health care costs and years of weak tax receipts due to slow economic growth and a series of tax cuts.

All of the states as well as the federal government are trying to rein in the rising costs of social programs, often over the protests of those who advocate for the poor and disabled. But there's also a philosophical component to that effort: the Bush administration says tax cuts stimulate the economy and create jobs that allow people to get off welfare.

Recently, the Senate passed spending cuts of \$35 billion, but the House called for far deeper cuts of \$49.9 billion. House and Senate negotiators must come up with a compromise bill that must then be passed by the full Congress.

"These are mandatory spending areas, which are 50 percent of the budget. If we are going to preserve a social safety net, we can't let these things keep growing at this rate or there will be no federal budget left," said U.S. Rep. Thad McCotter, R-Livonia, who sits on the House Budget Committee.

Objecting to the view that Congress is cutting program funding, McCotter says the reductions are rather a scaling back of the annual growth rate of entitlements, from 6.3 percent to 6.2 percent.

"This is the beginning of a discussion that has to take place with the American people. It's probably going to go on for 20 years. It won't take place overnight," added McCotter.

But Ron English, a 42-year-old fence installer from Algonac, says tough economic times underscore the need for food stamps and similar help.

"I think (lawmakers) are trying to pay for the war by cutting domestic programs," English said. "With all the plant closings, and now GM, in an industrial state like ours, we are dependent on safety nets."

Areas that could be cut back:

#### **Price supports for dairy and crop farmers**

Carl Bednarski, who grows corn and soybeans on his 1,400-acre farm in Caro, says Congress' steps to scale back price supports could "definitely hurt" in an era of chronically low farm prices. "It may affect our decisions to upgrade machines like tractors and combines. The farm is your livelihood. If you can cut family expenses -- like a trip or a new vehicle -- that would probably take precedence over an expenditure for a farm," said Bednarski, hinting at the ripple effect the cutback could have on farm-related suppliers, tourism and producers of cars and other consumer goods.

The House and the Senate propose cutting back more than \$3 billion from price supports set for growers of soybeans and similar row crops as well as from payments to farmers receive for wildlife conservation efforts.

#### **Subsidies on student loans**

Proponents say the subsidy given to lenders is higher than warranted with today's low interest rates and that the cutback wouldn't be felt by students. And some students would benefit by the House proposal to add \$11.5 billion in new grant and loan programs for students over five years.

#### **Medicaid**

Reductions in this program will have the most drastic impact. In Michigan, 1.45 million residents -- one out of every seven -- receive health care through Medicaid. It accounted for 23 percent of the state's budget in fiscal 2005, up from 8 percent in 1980. In addition, 1.1 million residents get food assistance -- double the number five years ago.

The House and Senate call for changes to Medicaid that would cost Michigan between \$50 million and \$100 million annually. The reduction would come in part by scaling back the rate of the federal match for optional Medicaid benefits. In Michigan, these optional benefits include services such as linking up developmentally disabled or mentally ill residents to safety net programs like food stamps or supplemental security income.

"Without assistance to get on a list for a Section 8 housing voucher or get food stamps, these people would essentially be denied access to those life-sustaining services," said Patrick Barrie, Michigan's deputy director for mental health and substance abuse services. "It's a daunting enough task for people without severe disabilities."

The more severe House version could mean a loss of an extra \$420 million to Michigan over the next five fiscal years. Michigan raises extra money to help pay for its Medicaid services through a federally matched tax it applies to managed care organizations (such as HMOs and similarly organized health care providers), as well as nursing homes and hospitals.

But the House would require states to broaden the definition of taxable entities to include health care plans not accepting Medicaid patients, which would create such a backlash that states would be pressured to end the tax altogether.

"In states experiencing enrollment growth and severe budgetary constraints, this tax has provided an effective means of maintaining Medicaid services," Barrie said. "Without the tax, we might have to cut eligibility, services or reimbursement levels to providers. Something's got to give."

### **Food stamps and enforcement of court-ordered child support**

The Senate would maintain the current commitment for these programs. But the House proposes a change in eligibility rules for food stamps that could affect 17,200 Michigan households, or 25,629 adults and children. That would be a loss of about \$6.2 million annually for food stamps Michigan gives to families with incomes that disqualify them for cash assistance.

### **Welfare program**

The House also proposes major changes to the federal welfare program that would force states to impose longer work hours on more of its welfare recipients or face fines. States would have to show that 70 percent, up from 50 percent now, of its welfare recipients are working or doing community service for a minimum of 24 hours a week, plus completing an additional 16 hours each week of such state-supervised activities as substance abuse counseling.

Critics say the proposals threaten important state flexibility and that no additional federal money is given to states to pay for the extra child care that would be needed because parents are out of the home for longer hours. The Senate doesn't include the welfare overhaul, and it is likely to fall out before the final vote.

### **Collection of court-ordered child support**

The House bill proposes to cut more than \$100 million in federal money Michigan gets for its program.

That \$100 million results from scaling back an incentive payment to states like Michigan with excellent child support collection programs.

That change would mean a one-time loss of \$54 million to Michigan, and could force more custodial parents into state assistance programs.

In addition, Michigan faces losing nearly \$65 million between fiscal years 2006 and 2010.

That loss would come from the government reducing from 66 percent to 50 percent the match it gives states for the administrative expenses of collecting child support.

"We are really the only program that makes sure private money, not public money, gets to the needy family -- and that is child support, whether from divorced parents or never-married parents," said Susan L. Thorman, the president of the Friends of the Court Association of Michigan, the state agency that collects child support payments.

"About 40 percent of our caseload of 1 million families are people who used to receive welfare," Thorman added.

"And the reason they don't now is child support. We really are the safety net for a huge number of families to keep them from requiring cash assistance, food stamps and Medicaid."

Stephanie Jackson of Detroit says the public often stereotypes people like her who receive help as not wanting to work.

But Jackson says the food stamps, cash grants, Medicaid and help by the state to force the fathers of her four children to pay support are essential to her dream of supporting her family through a good-paying job.

"Without assistance right now, we'd really collapse," said Jackson, who is in a training program to become a factory worker. "Public assistance isn't like a job. A job means self-esteem, and that's what I want."

## Wielding the budget ax

Cuts in social programs under consideration in Congress could mean the following for Michigan:

\$920 million less for Medicaid

\$31 million less for food stamps

\$100 million less to collect child support

Lower federal subsidies

of student loan interest rates

Lower subsidies for farmers

# Lawmakers outraged by day-care licensing

Saturday, December 03, 2005

By Ken Kolker  
The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- Two local legislators have called for an investigation into how the state allowed a day-care home to operate for at least six months after police found child porn on the home computer and after allegations were raised about sexual assault.

Kristopher Cross, 33, is accused of sexually assaulting three girls, ages 5 to 7, at the home he operated with his wife on Fuller Avenue NE.

Sen. Bill Hardiman, who chairs the Families and Human Services committee, said his attempts this week to question state officials about the situation were rebuffed over privacy rules. He only was told about general policy.

Hardiman, R-Kentwood, vowed to investigate, even if it means a special closed committee hearing to address confidentiality concerns.

"I don't see any way he would have kept his license," Hardiman said.

The author of the state's Crime Victims Rights Act was also outraged. State Rep. William Van Regenmorter said he believes the child porn should be enough for the state to pull a day-care license.

"Under any circumstances, convicted or not convicted, there shouldn't be the opportunity" to target children, said the Georgetown Township Republican.

The assaults allegedly occurred between late 2001 and 2004, but charges were not filed until September, police said.

The first allegation was made in January 2002 by a 4-year-old girl, but police said they determined then she was not a credible witness and didn't seek charges.

In December 2004, after a second girl made allegations, police seized a computer from Cross's home. By February, it was determined that images on the computer were child porn, police said. Prosecutors said they didn't have enough evidence to file charges early this year. They didn't charge Cross until after a third child came forward in August, they said.

Kent County Medical Examiner Stephen Cohle, who examined photographs seized from Cross's computer at the request of police, also questioned the state's response.

"I'm thinking what the hell is going on?" Cohle said Friday. "As a citizen, I'm thinking it looks pretty bad. I'm wondering what their thought process was."

Cohle said the photographs appeared to be girls in their early teens, perhaps 14 or 15. They appeared to be computer images downloaded from the Internet and are not girls who attended the day care, Cohle said.

Grand Rapids Police Sgt. Tim Williams said a state day-care worker was involved in the investigation and would have been aware of the pornography. The state Office of Children and Adult Licensing renewed the license in May, without a mention in its reports about child pornography.

Williams said the state also was aware of allegations raised against Cross in January 2002, by the then-4-year-old.

Cross who has denied the allegations, said his wife, Amanda, voluntarily closed his home day-care operation in August.

He faces charges of sexually assaulting three girls, ages 5 to 7, at the home between October 2001 and 2004. He was arraigned Friday in Grand Rapids District Court on the most recent allegations.

Meanwhile, some parents have pulled their children from a large day-care center owned by the Crosses, said Martha Kadolph, the former owner who said she continues to operate Family and Friends Child Care Center, 3999 Alpenhorn Drive NW in Alpine Township.

Staci Helwig, 25, said she removed her 5-year-old son Thursday after learning of the allegations. Kadolph this week gave parents a letter to inform them about "legal issues" involving Cross. The letter mentions nothing about sexual assault allegations.

# Alleged sex offender, wife buy child day-care

Sunday, December 04, 2005

MUSKEGON CHRONICLE NEWS SERVICE

The state is questioning how a man under investigation for sexually assaulting children at a day care in his home was at the same time able to buy a large day-care center in Alpine Township. Kristopher Cross, 33, is accused of assaulting three girls ages 5 through 7 at the Northeast Side home, a charge he denied. He was back in jail today after charges involving a third girl were filed.

He said Thursday, before his latest arrest, that he and his wife, Amanda Cross, bought the separate Family and Friends Day Care in Alpine Township four months ago.

He is not accused of assaulting children at that center.

A woman whose two daughters, ages 2 and 5, attend Family and Friends said she cannot understand how it could be co-owned by a sexual assault suspect.

"I can't believe they would be allowed to buy that if there were charges pending," said Lisa Price, of Lowell. "Doesn't anybody check out who's buying these places?"

State Department of Human Services spokeswoman Maureen Sorbet said the state is "investigating the allegations that the ownership of this center has changed."

State law does not allow ownership of a day-care center without a license, said Yolanda Sims, local supervisor of the Day Care Licensing Division of the state Department of Human Services. The day-care license, renewed in July, is under the name of Martha Kadolph, of Tallmadge Township, Sims said.

"(Amanda Cross) can say she's the owner, but she's not the owner," Sims said. "They can't transfer the license."

The state on Wednesday sent Kadolph a letter telling her she is responsible for the center, which is licensed to care for up to 118 children, Sims said.

"If anything happened to anyone in that building, we hold (Kadolph) responsible," Sims said.

"She has that license."

State officials also have notified Kadolph that Kristopher Cross is not allowed at the center when children are present, Sims said.

Kadolph said she sold the center to the Crosses in late summer, but she continues to operate it.

"They own it, I run it, and the license is in my name," she said. "I've been told by the state I am fine."

The Kent County Clerk has no record of a business transfer.

Some parents have pulled children from the home over the controversy, Kadolph said. "Parents are scared to death," she said.

She said Kristopher Cross "has nothing to do with our facility."

Cross said he has been to the center only a couple of times on weekends to make repairs, when no children were there.

Cross said he and his wife bought the Alpine Township center about the time they were voluntarily shutting down their home in Grand Rapids, which was licensed to care for 12 children.

That was about the time that a second girl came forward in August claiming he had sexually assaulted her. The state on Tuesday announced it had suspended the license for the home on Fuller.

Amanda Cross applied for a license to operate Friends and Family Center in July, but the state hasn't taken action on her request, Sims said. She wouldn't say why the state hasn't approved it. Before a license is approved, the state would conduct background investigations on the owner and the center director, Sims said.

Lisa Price, 38, whose daughters attend Family and Friends, said center officials recently told her and her husband they could write out day-care checks to the Crosses.

Price said she is considering removing her children from the center.

"When I heard about it, I thought, 'What else can I do? Where else can I put them?' " said Price.

"There's no way I'm going to allow my daughters there with that type of possibility."

Cross was charged in October with two counts of first-degree criminal-sexual conduct involving a 5-year-old girl, and two counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct involving a 7-year-old girl at the home on Fuller.

He also is charged with possession of child sexually abusive material at his home, records show.

Cross said he didn't sexually assault the girls and didn't have child porn on his computer.

If there were images on his computer, it was from Internet "pop-ups," he said. "I haven't seen the pictures; I don't know what they found."

Police said the images were of teenage girls and not of girls from his day-care home.



Sunday, December 04, 2005

## **Health care for children expanded States take additional steps to provide insurance to millions who might otherwise go without.**

John M. Broder  
New York Times

**LOS ANGELES--** The number of American children without health care coverage has been slowly but steadily declining over the past several years even as health care costs continue to rise and fewer employers provide insurance, creating a breach that states have stepped in to fill with new programs and fresh money.

The overall ranks of the uninsured continue to swell, to nearly 46 million Americans at the beginning of this year. But a landmark federal program begun in 1997 to provide health coverage to poor and working-class children and additional measures taken by states across the country have provided health insurance to millions of children who might otherwise go without.

In just the past year, 20 states have taken steps to increase access to health coverage for children and their parents and nine states have reversed actions they took during the 2001-03 economic downturn to limit benefits, according the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, part of the Kaiser Family Foundation, which tracks health care trends. As a result of these and other steps, there are 350,000 fewer uninsured children in the United States than there were in 2000, the foundation reported. Over the same period the overall number of uninsured rose by 6 million.

Ambitious steps like the child health bill just signed in Illinois and the "Dr. Dynasaur" children's health program in Vermont have broadened coverage for children.

Alan R. Weil, executive director of the National Academy for State Health Policy, a nonpartisan research group, said that children's health was one area of state spending that had consistently risen, at a time when most other programs -- including health care for adults -- have suffered cuts.

Weil said it was much easier for elected officials to approve spending "for the kids" than to expand welfare programs for adults, even in times of hardship.

### **Michigan coverage**

Despite the fading fortunes of the auto industry, 93 percent of Michigan children are covered, several percentage points higher than the national average. But that still leaves 200,000 Michigan youngsters uninsured, and Gov. Jennifer Granholm said she considers that a tragedy and a national disgrace.

Even though Granholm intends to ask for significant cuts in some state programs in her budget next month, she said she would propose increasing spending to address the problem of uninsured children.

# Republicans Find They Have to Sell Drug Benefit Plan

By ROBIN TONER and ROBERT PEAR

Published: December 5, 2005

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4 - Under the normal rules of politics, Congressional Republicans ought to be doing victory laps these days because of the new Medicare drug benefit, accepting the gratitude of the nation's retirees.

Instead, at meetings around the country, they are trying to ease widespread confusion and apprehension about a program that strikes many retirees as dauntingly complex. At a forum in Louisville, Ky., last week, Representative Anne M. Northup, a Republican, tried to reassure about 300 intensely attentive retirees. "I encourage you not to be discouraged," Ms. Northup said, soothingly. "If you feel like you don't know where to go, please call my office."

Beyond altruistic concerns, Congressional Republicans have a keen political interest in ensuring an orderly, successful rollout of the program, which happens to begin in a highly competitive midterm election year. The drug benefits are available for the first time beginning Jan. 1, and the initial sign-up period, which began Nov. 15, lasts until May 15.

Nobody knows how popular the drug benefit will ultimately be with the nation's retirees, who are a critical voting bloc. But Congressional Republicans, who pushed through the Medicare drug law in 2003, have clear political ownership of it, and whatever credit or blame it brings, strategists say.

Glen Bolger, a Republican pollster, said his advice was simple: "It's going to be associated with Republicans, so you better make sure it's something they understand and take advantage of."

Already, many Democratic strategists argue that the new program - because of its complicated structure and gaps in coverage - could be much more of a problem than an asset for Republicans next year. Some Democratic challengers are already using the issue on the campaign trail, like Christopher S. Murphy, who hopes to unseat Representative Nancy L. Johnson of Connecticut, a senior Republican who played an important role in writing the law.

"Seniors, frustrated with the complexity of the drug benefit, are realizing that it was constructed to help the insurance industry and the drug industry," said Mr. Murphy, a state senator, in a common Democratic refrain. "It's more helpful to those industries than to a lot of seniors."

Celinda Lake, a Democratic pollster, said the idea that the new law prohibited the government from negotiating lower prices with drug companies was particularly unpopular with retirees. And, Ms. Lake added, older baby boomer women - presumably trying to figure out the plan for their parents - react negatively to its complexity.

Republicans counter that, properly explained, the drug benefit is a huge advantage to the 42 million Americans on Medicare - the biggest expansion of the program since its creation 40 years ago.

"Establishing the drug program was a compassionate thing to do," said Representative Phil Gingrey, a Georgia Republican and doctor who heads a health care task force for House Republicans. "President Clinton and Congressional Democrats were unable to do it."

Mr. Gingrey, who has held more than 40 town hall meetings on Medicare in the last few years, added: "If the new program works, and we truly believe it will, we should see less diabetes, less kidney failure, fewer strokes, and we could save money in other parts of Medicare. That's the political message. We should be able to win this argument."

Even so, Democrats, and some Republicans, are already pushing legislation to extend the May deadline for signing up for the drug benefit without penalty. They argue that retirees need more time to decide what to do and more flexibility to change their minds. The penalty for a late sign-up is significant - an increase in premiums of 1 percent for every month past the deadline.

"Seniors are confused, bewildered and frightened," said Senator Bill Nelson, Democrat of Florida, who is leading the push for a delay.

The administration is opposed to such delays, arguing they are unnecessary and would only compound the uncertainty about the program.

Representative Michael G. Fitzpatrick, a freshman Republican from suburban Philadelphia, said that after a dozen town hall meetings in his district, "what I heard, universally, from my senior constituents was, 'We need more time.'"

The Medicare drug plan was devised to reflect central Republican tenets: that private companies, and private market forces, are the best way to deliver drug benefits to the nation's elderly; that the government's role should be sharply limited, particularly when it comes to exerting price pressure on the drug companies; and that the nation's retirees ought to have a full array of options for their drug coverage.

In fact, Medicare beneficiaries have many more choices than officials had expected. In Kentucky and Illinois, for example, they can choose from 42 free-standing prescription drug plans, with different premiums, deductibles, co-payments and lists of covered drugs. Many recipients say they simply feel overwhelmed.

"So many choices!" said Virginia R. Potempa, 80, after a Medicare forum held last week by Representative Judy Biggert, a Republican, in Bolingbrook, Ill., outside Chicago. "The government seems to think everybody works a computer. Well, we do not."

Still, Mrs. Potempa, who spends \$300 a month for six prescription drugs, said she intended to enroll in the plan. "We are very concerned," she said. "We need coverage. We need insurance."

Mrs. Biggert said she was confident that retirees were becoming more familiar and comfortable with the plan. But Representative Jan Schakowsky, Democrat of Illinois, said she held a meeting on Medicare last week that ended with a constituent standing up and declaring, "This is just ridiculous."

Ms. Schakowsky said frustration with the drug benefit reminded her of the anger that forced Congress to repeal a 1988 law covering catastrophic medical expenses under Medicare. At the time, she was executive director of the Illinois Council of Senior Citizens, whose members

chased after Dan Rostenkowski, then the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and a principal author of that law, in what became an iconic image of popular uprising against an out-of-touch Congress.

Ms. Schakowsky warned that Republicans "better go out and buy some running shoes, because angry senior citizens will be after them."

Representative Anthony Weiner, Democrat of New York, said he was stunned by the turnout at two meetings he held last week - more than 400 people at a session in Brooklyn, and 700 in Queens. Like many other Democrats, Mr. Weiner opposed the bill but said he wanted to help his constituents figure out "how they can benefit from a program that's inefficient and impractical." Republicans angrily respond that Democrats have sought partisan advantage on the drug issue from the start - often heedless of what it might mean for retirees who could in fact be helped by the program. Representative Northup, after her meeting in Louisville last week, said, "It's been so disheartening for me to see the Democrats almost hope bad things will happen so they can gain some political advantage."

Robert Blendon, an expert at Harvard on public opinion and health, said he believed the drug program would become a major factor in next year's elections only if so many retirees became so anxious that they failed to sign up - and then suddenly faced a penalty for doing so.

But Democrats clearly see the drug benefit as part of a broader message about the influence of special interests in a Republican-controlled Congress, arguing that Republicans were far more concerned about protecting the profits of the drug and insurance industry than delivering real coverage to beneficiaries. Moreover, some Democratic strategists said, Republicans are also vulnerable among retirees because of President Bush's failed effort to partly privatize Social Security, and because of ethical scandals rocking the party.

Representative Rahm Emanuel of Illinois, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, scoffed at the idea that the drug benefit would help Republicans at all. "It's a loser for seniors, it's a loser for taxpayers on the political front, and it's an example that there's a cost to this corruption," he said.

Mr. Emanuel added that he doubted a single Republican in a competitive race would feature the drug benefit in television advertising.

Representative Johnson, in Connecticut, said she planned to. "Absolutely, without question," she said. "It's a wonderful benefit."

Mrs. Johnson predicted that the new Medicare law would follow the course of the 1996 welfare law. After the welfare law took effect, following years of impassioned debate, she said, it was widely accepted as a major improvement in social policy.

# Medicare drug aid mess needs fixing

The Kalamazoo Gazette

Editorial

Friday, December 2, 2005

Congressional investigators reported this week that the federal government's prescription drug discount card program, the precursor to a financial assistance program which will take effect next year, is riddled with problems.

Most senior citizens could have told us that. Ever since enrollment for the Medicare prescription drug-benefit program began in mid-November, phones have been ringing off the hook at government agency offices.

Lawmakers and government officials reported Wednesday that they found many flaws in a program that issued drug discount cards to 6.4 million Medicare beneficiaries in advance of implementing the full-fledged program next year.

Investigators from a nonpartisan arm of Congress said that problems they encountered included incomplete and inaccurate information disseminated by the government and insurance companies, along with improper use of the discount cards.

They also found that enrollment in the program was lower than expected because of "confusion and misperceptions about the drug cards among Medicare beneficiaries." The "abundance of choices" and the cards' uncertain value may have discouraged some people from enrolling.

A Medicare official defended the discount card program and said they've learned some valuable lessons that can be applied to the drug benefit next year.

We certainly hope so.

If seniors are in Medicaid or are low-income, they should make a decision about this program soon. The number to call for information is 1(800)MEDICARE. Drug coverage will begin on Jan. 1 for those who enroll before Dec. 31. Many programs have been offered in southwestern Michigan to help people navigate the confusing labyrinth of information that's being offered about the program.

On Wednesday, for example, Jo Murphy of the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan will be in Allegan to present a Medicare informational seminar starting at 1 p.m. in the Lifelong Learner's Senior Group at the Allegan Public Schools Administration Building, 550 Fifth St.

For senior citizens who already have drug coverage, our advice is not to rush into a decision. Take time to research the options and consider all the nuances. There are many.

The deadline for enrolling without penalty is May 15.

# **Frontpage: Help for sorting through plans available**

Midland Daily News

12/04/2005

Frontpage is a cooperative effort between the Midland Daily News and Midland Community Television and discusses important local issues of interest to people in Midland County. The host of the show is Ralph E. Wirtz, managing editor of the Midland Daily News.

Wirtz: An issue that just began the day before we taped this show and will continue into the early part of next year is Medicare Part D, a prescription drug program. Talking yesterday with a few senior citizens, I came to the conclusion there is not a whole lot of information out there that is understandable. Today my guest is Kevin Roeder from the Apothecary Shoppes in Midland and Traverse City and he is going to be discussing the issue with us. Welcome, Kevin.

Roeder: Thank you.

Wirtz: We will get started with the Detroit Free Press ran an article that states part D stands for dumbfounded. Can you elaborate a little bit on that? How did the drug plan come about and how long it has taken to get us where we are today?

Roeder: Originally, the prescription drug plan was enacted into law in 2003. The first part of that we saw a couple of years ago with the introduction of discount cards. As of Jan. 1, 2006, Medicare Part D prescription drug program actually kicks into play. It is an actual benefit, it is a prescription drug program. It is run by what is referred to prescription drug plans or PDPs. They are actually private pharmacy benefit managers or insurance companies that actually administer the program and the government. There lies the problem: You have about 80 programs or more across the country, with varying details. It is a difficult choice for seniors to pick because they are getting a lot of information from a lot of different sources. The main frame outline is all the same though.

Wirtz: Now, if you live in Detroit is the program a little bit different than if you live in Midland or Traverse City?

Roeder: Essentially not. Each district or region is different. Michigan has its own, it's region 13, so good luck to everyone in Michigan. Again, the main blueprint is the same everywhere. There are a handful of national plans and regional plans, so patients and beneficiaries can pick from regional and national plans.

Wirtz: Now these plans are run by insurance companies or HMOs. What is the spread there? Are there a lot of different agencies?

Roeder: It is essentially what we would refer to as insurance companies – companies like Aetna, United Health Care, Medco, Express Grip, Caremark, Community Care Rx and Blue Cross Blue Shield. All are very familiar names. Many of them have sponsored Medicare Part D plans.

Wirtz: Now I was reading that perhaps some people should not jump into this program, that they do have a little bit of time to sign up for it. What are the time frames on it?

Roeder: Actually, enrollment material was sent out over two to three months ago for certain individuals. The enrollment period started Nov. 15. There was a good article in the Midland Daily News yesterday (Nov. 15) stating that someone, I do not recall who it was, had made a comment, "Hold onto your horses, take a step back, take a deep breath." You do not have to jump into it right away. You have really before the new benefits start a month.

In that time I would suggest people collect all the material they have been getting and contact Senior Services – they are doing an excellent job of helping folks – your local pharmacies, you can go on the web page [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) and you can go on the individual sponsors. They have a web page also. They all have 800 numbers. I think your statement is, yes, you have plenty of time and I would take the time and go through the information and make a very good informed decision.

Wirtz: Is this decision going to be different from neighbor to neighbor, depending on the economic circumstances in the families?

Roeder: It could very well be. First let's discuss who is eligible for the Medicare Part D program. If you are over 65 and are Medicare A or Medicare B, you are eligible for the new Medicare Part D prescription program. Your question is it going to change from person to person, everybody's financial situation is a little bit different, we will discuss some of them here shortly, different folks will pick different plans. It is like you will pick the plan that is best for you and best suits you and your family.

Wirtz: OK, so if you are now on Medicare Part A or B you can sign up for part D, but do you have to sign up?

Roeder: You do not have to sign up; it is a voluntary program.

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Dec 5, 3:24 PM EST

## **Federal proposal could cost state child support dollars**

By AMY F. BAILEY  
Associated Press Writer

LANSING, Mich. (AP) -- A federal spending proposal to cut millions of dollars from child support collection and enforcement efforts would make it harder to get payments and distribute them, which could force some families to file for cash assistance.

That's according to Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan and Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow. Corrigan, a Republican, and Udow, who was appointed by Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm, teamed up Monday to criticize the plan.

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 recently approved by the U.S. House would gradually cut the federal government's reimbursement rate for the administration of states' child support programs from 66 percent to 50 percent.

Dropping the federal reimbursement would leave fewer resources to collect child support and pay it out to families because the state would not be able to offset the loss, Corrigan said. Some families who stop getting child support would have to apply for welfare, she said.

"To the extent that any Michigan citizen in the child support system has had a problem with the collection of their child support check in the past years, just get ready because you will lose state workers in this program," Corrigan said at a news conference.

The proposal would cost Michigan nearly \$250 million in federal payments to the child support system, Corrigan said. The Washington-based Center for Law and Social Policy projected that Michigan would see its child support collections drop by \$397 million in the first four years and \$1.2 billion between 2006 and 2015.

The cut was not in the deficit reduction legislation that won approval from the U.S. Senate. A conference committee is expected to be named soon to hammer out the differences between the two chambers.

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On the Net:

Michigan Department of Human Services: <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs>

Michigan Supreme Court: <http://www.courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt>

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Michigan

## **Funding for child support at risk**

### **State leaders hope to stop federal cuts**

December 5, 2005

BY JACK KRESNAK  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Michigan stands to lose \$249 million in federal funding for its child-support enforcement system during the next five years, a reduction that would be devastating to the state's children and could increase the number of them on public assistance, say Michigan officials from both political parties.

"This is penny-wise and pound-foolish," Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan said.

"It is under-resourced now and this is just going to be devastating. Why would we do this?"

Corrigan, a Republican, is asking the public for help in persuading Michigan's 15 members of Congress to stop the proposed cuts to the child-support enforcement program.

She will be joined at a news conference today at the Michigan Hall of Justice in Lansing by Marianne Udow, director of the Michigan Department of Human Services, and Susan Thorman, president of the state's Friend of the Court Association.

"We're already hurting on the administrative side. Any court will tell you," Udow said.

The U.S. House of Representatives approved cuts last month that would reduce federal Title IV-D support for state employees who work to enforce court-ordered child support from 66% of administrative costs to 50% over the next five years.

The legislation, called the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, must be reconciled in a conference committee with a deficit reduction bill passed by the U.S. Senate that does not make such drastic cuts in programs designed to help needy children.

Rochelle Ponder, who is dean of students at a charter school in Detroit, is a single mother of three who is owed about \$6,000 in child support from the children's father.

"I think it's ridiculous," Ponder said. "These systems were developed and put in place because people were not supporting their children. Of all systems to cut, this makes no sense.

"You take even a minute amount from that support and it's going to fall apart."

Last month, all nine Republican members of Congress from Michigan voted for the cuts to children's programs; all six of the state's Democratic representatives voted against the cuts.

U.S. Rep. Dave Camp, R-Midland, said he voted to cut the rate of increase in the programs to bring federal spending more in line with revenues. The programs include Title IV-D and Title IV-E; the latter pays some costs of children who enter foster care from low-income backgrounds. Camp said federal support through the Title IV-D program, which pays for about two-thirds of states' administrative costs, should be more in line with the vast majority of federal programs that typically pay 50% of such costs.

"Administrative costs don't go to children," Camp said.

The cuts in Title IV-E under the House bill would have little impact on Michigan, Udow said.

Michigan, the eighth-largest state by population, has the fourth-highest child-support collection rate among the 50 states. The state's child-support enforcement system works through local Friend of the Court offices.

Currently, the Title IV-D program gives Michigan about \$175 million a year and state taxpayers kick in about \$90 million to run the child-support system. About 1,700 public employees work in the Michigan system, including assistant prosecutors, Friend of the Court referees, clerks, typists and family counselors.

The Michigan Friend of the Court system collects about \$1.4 billion a year, enforcing a system of private payments by noncustodial parents to custodial parents.

The Washington, D.C.-based Center for Law and Social Policy estimates that if the Title IV-D cuts go through, states will collect about \$24 billion less in support for children over the next decade.

In Michigan, as much as \$397 million in court-ordered child support will go uncollected during the first five years and \$1.2 billion over 10 years, according to the CLASP study.

Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at 313-223-4544 or [kresnak@freepress.com](mailto:kresnak@freepress.com).

# Public gets say in child support rules - Georgia

## Hearings on plan for changes begin

By NANCY BADERTSCHER  
*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*  
Published on: 12/05/05

A series of public hearings will begin Monday night on a dollars-and-cents plan for divvying up the costs of raising children of divorce.

The hearings — including one at 6 p.m. at Georgia Public Television in Atlanta — culminate years of debate in Georgia over whether child support payments should be calculated on both parents' incomes.

Early this year, the state Legislature changed the way child support payments are figured in Georgia by requiring judges to consider the incomes of both parents when determining child support awards. In the past, child support payments generally were based only on the income of the parent who does not have custody.

The Child Support Guidelines Commission, chaired by House Rules Committee Chairman Earl Ehrhart (R-Powder Springs), last week released two possible tables that would help judges calculate child support and announced plans to solicit public comments on them in Atlanta, Albany, Columbus and Savannah.

Both tables are based on economic studies of the costs of raising a child. They take into account incomes and the number of children.

Ehrhart said Friday that he expects "all but the extremists" on both sides of the issue to find the new system workable and fair.

"The gloom and doom just didn't materialize," he said, referring to critics who argued that an income-sharing formula could hurt low-income families. "It has both sides buying into the equation, and that only benefits the children. This is reality, and this is what every other state's done."

But some remain skeptical, including Shelley Senterfitt, a lawyer and government affairs consultant who has closely followed the overhaul plan.

Senterfitt said it's difficult to compare the new tables with existing child support guidelines to determine how children will fare in terms of financial support. But she said it appears that the total support may increase in lower-income families and decrease for children of parents with combined incomes in the \$50,000-to-\$75,000 range.

"On the one hand, I am glad to see that the poorest children are not going to be further impoverished," Senterfitt said. "I worry that we're underestimating the real costs of raising children in those middle-income families."

She said she is also concerned that the child support commission has discussed modifying a provision that could reduce child support payments from non-custodial parents who spend at least 100 days a year with their children. Senterfitt said a reduction in "parenting time" could spark more legal fights between parents.

CaSandra Minichiello of the group Georgians for Child Support Reform said the creation of a table that considers both incomes is "a really good steppingstone to where we've been. No matter which table we get, it's a step in the right direction."

Lansing State Journal

December 3, 2005

## **Police await baby's autopsy report**

Autopsy results may come in the next week for a 7-month-old baby whose body was found in a Lansing apartment Tuesday, police said.

A relative called police late Tuesday afternoon and asked them to check on an infant on the 500 block of Avon Street, police said. Firefighters and paramedics found and brought the baby girl to a hospital, where she was pronounced dead.

No one is in custody, and police still are investigating whether a crime was committed, Lansing police Lt. Bruce Ferguson said.

# Child Dies In House That's Now Set To Be Auctioned

## *Family Protesting Sale Of House Because It's 'Crime Scene'*

POSTED: 1:31 pm EST December 2, 2005

CLINTON, Mich. -- A home day care where a 17-month-old boy died is being put up for auction, but his family says the home is a crime scene and selling it could jeopardize the investigation.

The Michigan State Police are investigating Hunter Atwell's Sept. 27 death at the Clinton home as a homicide.

The boy's family members in Tuscola County believe the sale could erase evidence.

"Something is not right about selling a crime scene before the investigation is done," Barb Atwell told Flint's ABC12.

The house and its contents are going to auction Saturday.

But the Atwell family said their lawyer has not been able to examine the home. The family's attorney plans on going to court Friday to try to stop the auction.

Detectives aren't saying how Hunter died or why they suspect a homicide. According to ABC 12, the child's death was first thought to be an accident, but police are now investigating it as a homicide.

The day care operator has left the state and there have been no arrests.

*Copyright 2005 by [ClickOnDetroit.com](http://ClickOnDetroit.com). The Associated Press contributed to this report*

MIRS

December 2, 2005

## **Spade Honored By 'Michigan's Children'**

Rep. Dudley **SPADE** (D-Tipton) was honored this week with the 'Doing Something Wonderful Legislative Award' from Michigan's Children.

Spade, who was recognized by the group as a "visionary freshman legislator," serves on the Family and Children Services Committee where he has had the opportunity to apply his experience as a child advocate.

"I promised when I came to Lansing that I would fight for children in our State," Spade said to the group assembled at the Michigan's Children Much Ado about Something Wonderful reception Tuesday evening. "But, it is easy for us to get caught up in the daily battles we fight. While none of us do this job for recognition, it is wonderful to be honored and this award is special to me. It reminds me that I am keeping the promise I made to myself, my constituents, and the children of Michigan."

Spade, who spent 17 years as the Controller at Boysville of Michigan (now Holy Cross Services) and continued his service to child advocacy charities at Starr Commonwealth, most recently in the capacity of Director of Information Systems and Technology, has been recognized before for his work on behalf of Michigan's children.

Under Spade's watch, Starr Commonwealth was noted by Consumer's Digest as the 6th most efficient charity in the nation. Additionally, in 1994 Spade was awarded the first Michigan Federation of Private Child and Family Agencies' Peer Award for outstanding dedication in service to Michigan's families and children.



Monday, December 05, 2005

## **United Way hot line is service link Bilingual operators will connect people with health and job programs, volunteers.**

Eric Lacy / The Detroit News

Metro Detroit's long-awaited 24-hour free phone hot line connecting residents to health, human and volunteer services was scheduled to be launched today by the United Way for Southeastern Michigan.

The service can be reached by calling 211.

This number connects callers with bilingual operators with access to a database of more than 5,000 programs in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

United Way President Michael Brennan says the hot line is an example of what can be done when community leaders, services organizations and other charitable groups come together for a common goal: helping others.

"This is a clear demonstration that we can get more done together within this region than trying to do it alone," Brennan said. "Any time you have partners coming together, across geographic lines to provide a stronger service for residents, it's a real positive step."

United Way operators will strive to answer calls within 60 seconds or less.

A call to 211 should eliminate obstacles that many people encounter when they attempt to find programs and organizations and are given several numbers or transferred to various offices, said El Cabrel Lee, United Way's director of 211.

"It's an easy link for people in need or people who want to help others," Lee said. "We are a growing and changing region, so this is a way to help streamline information that people need."

Lee says there are currently 169 211 call centers in 32 states.

Metro Detroit's 211 hot line is funded by more than \$6 million in grants that cover start-up costs and its operations for the next three years. Lee says another \$2 million is needed to reach the United Way's fundraising goal for the service.

Major sponsors of the hot line include the Kresge Foundation, Comerica Charitable Foundation, DaimlerChrysler, DTE Energy and Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

Alice Wiemken, 64, is unemployed and wants to use 211 to find a full-time job.

Wiemken of Ypsilanti was a secretary at an automotive supplier in Farmington Hills until she was laid off in 2001. Since then, she's worked a series of temporary full- and part-time jobs.

"Anyone in the midst of problems always needs some kind of hope," she said.

### **About 211**

United Way's free 211 phone hot line service was expected to open at 10:30 this morning. It is a 24-hour service that provides resources such as job training, health care, community service, financial assistance and crisis counseling.

When a person calls the number, an automated system answers that allows the caller to be transferred to a live operator.

The operator has access to a database of more than 5,000 programs in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties that specialize in health, human and volunteer services.

United Way officials want to answer calls within one minute.

Detroit Free Press

## **Crisis call center to begin answering 2-1-1**

December 5, 2005

Do you need help or know of someone who does? Do you know where to turn in a crisis?

Starting today in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties, it's as simple as dialing 2-1-1.

The United Way for Southeastern Michigan, with money from several foundations and corporations, plans to roll out its 2-1-1 Call Center this morning in Detroit.

The multilingual information and referral service will connect people to health and human services options, as well as volunteer opportunities, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service also can disseminate public health and emergency readiness information in a crisis.

Advocates for the system say it should reduce non-life-threatening calls to 9-1-1.

Fixes had to be made on more than 60 cell phone towers and at 72 SBC switching stations to make the system work.

*By Jack Kresnak*

# Food Bank reports especially big need for Christmas drive

Saturday, December 3, 2005

BY JERRY NUNN

BAY CITY TIMES WRITER

As Bay-area residents find their Christmas spirit, directors of local food pantries remind gift-givers not to overlook the area's poor and hungry.

Recent disasters such as the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have proven stiff competition for the region's providers of food aid, redirecting supplies they normally receive to other hard-hit areas. For the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, it means the reduction from the 15 to 18 truckloads of food they normally receive each month to as few as three to five shipments.

"The whole holiday season has demonstrated an increased need," said Bill Kerr, president of Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, which delivers food to pantries throughout the area.

Which means that the Food Bank is increasing its efforts to raise funds to help local people who need help with groceries. A donation envelope to the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan was included in The Bay City Times on Friday.

"Michigan - and particularly eastern Michigan - has been doubly hit. Particularly in Bay and Saginaw counties, with the Delphi situation. And we are dealing not only with a job loss situation but with fear," Kerr said.

"One day these people are employed and making a good living, the next day they are the ones in need."

Zola Groh is food coordinator for the Pinconning Area Emergency Food Pantry, a Food Bank of Eastern Michigan partner. Finding her organization's shelves nearly bare she "sent out the word" to local organizations, reminding them of increased seasonal needs.

"The churches and everybody chipped in and we are stocked right back up," Groh said.

Yet, while donations continue, Groh worries about what the future holds.

"In 25 years, we were never as low as we were this year," she said, noting the 112 orders her organization has taken for Christmas food baskets already number 12 more than last year.

"It is getting quite bad out there with people off work. I am sure the need is going to increase even more," Groh said.

But Kerr noted - for those wanting to stretch their philanthropic dollar - the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan offers plenty of return for the charitable buck. The Food bank returns 98 percent of its funding directly to the program; for every dollar the Food Bank receives, \$14 dollars worth of food becomes available at the local level, Kerr said.

In 2004, the Food Bank distributed 15.2 million pounds of food and has a goal for this year of 15.7 million pounds. Through 380 local-level partners, the organization distributes food in 22 eastern Michigan counties from its 42,000-square-foot-facility in Flint. The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan distributes canned goods, fresh and frozen vegetables, cereals, along with milk, juice, fruit and government surplus meats, cheese and other commodities.

The facility allows the Food Bank to offer products that are often unaffordable elsewhere, according to Faye Thompson, coordinator of Outreach Committee First, a food pantry operated by Bay City's United Methodist Church.

Calling her organization one of the smaller ones, Thompson said United Methodist serves up to 200 senior citizens each month and provides lunch to nearly 60 grade-school children each week. And those are in addition to the emergency food services Outreach provides.

"You don't really know what it is like to be poor unless you have gone without," Thompson said.

"I am a little bit concerned. More and more people are needing help," she said.

Thompson recently received \$700 from United Methodist's congregation of 300 members to apply toward the Food Bank. And a few weeks ago, while packing Thanksgiving food baskets for families in need, Thompson said she was helped by a group of kindergarten students.

"We have the little ones help so they can learn what giving is all about," Thompson said.

"One of them looked at all the food and asked, 'Can we send some food to the flood areas?' " she recalled.

"It is simply amazing," Thompson added. "Here was a little 5-year-old and he wanted to help others that much.

"I thought that really said a lot."

- Jerry Nunn is a staff writer for The Times. He can be reached at 894-9647 or by e-mail at [jnunn@bc-times.com](mailto:jnunn@bc-times.com).

Posted: 12-2-2005

## **Feeding the hungry — 2,000 so far — with respect and a smile**

By MARK STEIGENGA  
Ludington Daily News Staff Writer

Hunger is on the mind of Carmine Killey every day. "If I am not on the phone I am at my desk writing grant proposals," says the United Way of Oceana County office manager. "We have not missed a single month of food delivery since May, 2004."

On the second Thursday of each month, Killey can be found directing a corps of volunteers swarming around a beverage distribution trailer in the Shelby High School parking lot.

"Seven Up" still appears under compartments that once dispensed soft drinks.

Now those roll-up doors conceal lugs of strawberries or skids of pumpkins or crates of orange juice.

"I never know what we are getting until the truck rolls in and the driver hands me a menu," says Killey.

What she does know is that in those compartments are 10,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables nearing the end of their shelf life — food that would otherwise be discarded in a few days. Instead, it will be divided up between as many as 150 families, many of whom have waited in line as long as four hours to be included in the 10 a.m. distribution.

"People don't seem to understand that everyone who comes gets food," says Killey. "The last cars may get a few less of something, but then they probably get a few more of something else."

According to Killey, there are no requirements for receiving food. "I figure that if they went through the effort to get here and then wait in line, they probably need it.

"All we ask is that they fill out a simple form listing name, address, number in family, and how they heard about the program. Although most of the people come from Oceana County, we do have regulars from Muskegon and Ludington."

Since beginning the program in November 2003, Killey has records of serving nearly 2,000 families. Each family goes home with about 60 pounds of groceries per visit.

"The food comes in like Christmas," says Killey. "You open the doors and there it is, all at once, and you never know what it is going to be."

When the doors are open, Killey sets her volunteers into action. "If we find 1,000 pounds of potatoes, for instance, we know exactly how to break that down based on the number of families waiting in line.

At 10 a.m. the procession of hungry families driving cars with open trunks begins to pass by. As the volunteers load in the food, Killey takes the opportunity to talk to the clients.

"My first rule is always to smile.

"I am 66 years old, living on a 20-hour-a-week part-time job plus Social Security benefits, so I know what it means to run out of money to buy food. I know that I don't like to be treated rotten just because I have to ask.

"So I treat everybody who comes to me the way I would like to be treated — with a smile and with respect.

"When I talk to the people in line, I realize how many of them I know personally. I know they are having trouble and I am so glad they are here."

Killey believes that a key part of treating people with respect is giving them choices.

"I ask them if they like this or if they want some of that. Then, if I think they may not know what to do with a certain item, I tell them — this is how you cook a pumpkin, or, did you know you could make all these things with a squash?"

By noon, with the last family headed home and the beverage truck on its way back to the Second Harvest Gleaners warehouse in Grand Rapids, Carmine Killey is ready to turn her attention to next month's Mobile Food Pantry.

Her first concern is volunteers.

"I nail everybody to the wall.

"Last week we were at a local company doing a United Way hot dog cookout, and there, eating lunch, was the head of personnel. Next month that company will be sending 10 people to help staff the Mobile Food Pantry.

"Usually I just get on the phone and start asking people. Of course there are the regular churches like New Hope in Shelby, Centenary United Methodist in Pentwater and People's in Ludington that always respond. And then there are a few individuals who always come."

Killey tries to arrange 15 volunteers each month, realizing that much of the food comes in bulk and requires more time to break

down into family-size portions.

"I just really want to let these volunteers know how much they are appreciated. These people are out there helping in all kinds of weather. In the summer it can be so hot you can hardly see.

Then you get winter days that are so cold you are freezing.

"In spite of all that, I have yet to have a volunteer go home without asking, 'Can we do this again?'"

Providing food for 150 families does not happen without cost, and each month Killey spends numerous hours on the telephone raising the \$400 needed to purchase and transport 10,000 pounds of gleaned food.

"The Mobile Food Pantry has absolutely nothing to do with our annual United Way Fund Campaign," Killey is quick to point out.

"This program is entirely supported by donations from businesses, from churches, and from ordinary people who care that there are those in our communities who are hungry.

"The reality is that if just 400 people would each contribute \$1 per month, we could provide food for 150 hungry families."

For Carmine Killey, the rewards of her work often come in small ways.

"Sometimes I get an application for other services, and at the end the client will write, 'Thank you for the food. That really helped us a lot.'"

Then there are the small gifts that come in the mail — like the homemade bookmark with the single word, 'Thanks.'"

"Often people will roll down their car window as they leave the food line and call out, 'Merry Christmas, Carmine,' or, 'Happy Thanksgiving, Carmine.'

"Those are the moments that make it all worthwhile."

For more information, or to volunteer or make a contribution, Carmine Killey may be reached by calling the United Way office in Shelby at (231) 861-6197.

A similar Second Harvest Gleaners Mobile Food Pantry program has been started recently in Mason County with distribution on the third Tuesday of each month in the parking lot of Cornerstone Baptist Church, corner of Nelson Road and Lawndale Street, Ludington. For information on that program call Megan Maltbie at 845-1723.

## Grass-roots effort helps foster children

A Lansing church has recruited about 30 people will-

ing to become foster parents since launching a grassroots effort this summer.

The One Church, One Child program will continue finding homes for local black foster children for at least one more year, program manager Loran Graham said.

Leaders originally hoped to find 20 families by now.

Because of the early success, the state Department of Human Services extended a \$50,000 pilot grant it gave St. Stephen's Community Church earlier this year.

St. Stephen's has worked

with other local black churches to recruit families and help ease a shortage of suitable foster homes in Ingham County.

None of the families has hosted children in their homes yet, but Graham said he expects many to complete the application and training process soon.

*From staff writers Stacey Range, Nicole Geary and Tom Lambert. Is there a local story you'd like to see revisited in Monday Update? E-mail metro@lsj.com, or call 267-1300.*



# The rising cost of keeping warm High fuel prices hit pocketbooks hard after three years of increases

Sunday, December 4, 2005

By Barbara Walters and Rex Hall Jr.  
KalamazooGazette staff writers

It will take a lot more in cold, hard cash to keep warm this winter.

The Michigan Public Service Commission predicts heating bills will jump as much as 47 percent this year in southwestern Michigan. The average bill for November through March will be at least \$200 more than last winter and \$500 more than two years ago for homeowners who heat with natural gas, according to the MPSC and Consumers Energy Co.

"I haven't seen anything like this since the 1970s," when the nation went through an energy crisis, Dan Hoogerheide, who's been at Hoekstra's True Value Hardware in Kalamazoo nearly 50 years, said of the run-up in heating costs.

Hoogerheide has been busy selling electric room heaters, kits with plastic and double-sided tape for windows and weather-stripping.

"Everybody's grasping at straws to decrease their bills," he said. "It affects all of us, really now, even in the middle class."

The hike in energy costs is hitting home at all income levels. At new, high-end houses on the market in Texas Township, more prospective buyers are asking about high-efficiency furnaces and other energy-saving features, said Dave Timmer, senior estimator for American Village Builders Inc.

Officials with the agencies that help lower-income families pay heating bills, meanwhile, are wondering if they will have enough money this year.

"We see a lot of families with children," said Maria Almaguer, director of social services at the Salvation Army in Kalamazoo. "The adults are working, but it is not enough to keep them going. A lot of them are working on minimum wage jobs or part time."

## **Lack of supply**

Three years ago, it cost about \$753 for the winter to heat the typical Midwestern home, according to the National Energy Assistance Directors Association. By last year, that cost increased to \$1,029. This year, the number is expected to reach \$1,305.

Reasons for the price climb are rooted in basic supply and demand. Natural gas produced in the United States is the only practical source for Americans, since it is difficult and expensive to convert gas into liquid for shipping.

But there's historically been opposition to drilling in many places in the United States. In the Gulf Coast, where there is heavy drilling, hurricanes Katrina and Rita crippled production. Only 30 percent of the region's production has been restored.

The result of all these factors, according to Consumers Energy spokesman Jeff Holyfield, is a natural gas market in which production has gone flat while demand has continued to increase.

About 80 percent of Michigan homes are heated with natural gas, according to the state Public Service Commission. The cost of home heating oil and propane is also rising. Heating oil prices spiked 18.5 percent in Michigan from March through November, while propane went up 8.3 percent over that period, the commission reported.

"We're going from a long period in America when energy was affordable. Now for a lot of people it is not," said Mark Wolfe, director of the National Energy Assistance Director's Association. "And it looks as if it is going to be that way in the future. The only real variable is the weather."

The National Weather Service forecast for December through February is for slightly warmer-than-normal temperatures for the Midwest.

### **Shave expenses**

Think three basic things when you want to save money on your heating bills, experts say: thermostat, windows and roof.

The easiest way to save is to turn down thermostats. You'll save 1 to 3 percent on your bill for each degree, according to Consumers Energy.

Set the thermostat at 68 degrees when you're home and 65 degrees when you're away a short time, it

"You use much less energy to heat the house up when you return than to keep it heated while you are away," the power company's Web site says. Installing a programmable thermostat could save as much as 20 percent, so you could recover the cost in a year, it says.

Pete Woodruff, president of E.M. Sergeant Heating & Cooling in Kalamazoo, said the biggest money-saving step is limiting heat loss through windows and roofs.

"If you crawl up in your attic and you only have four inches of insulation, probably the best bang for your buck will be to add insulation," he said. Eight inches is good; 12 is great, he said.

"The second thing is that if you have old single-pane, drafty windows, buy some storm windows," or double-pane windows, Woodruff said.

"You can go to the nth degree and buy a super-efficient furnace, but as long as you have single-pane windows you aren't going to get much benefit," he said.

Jack Gesmundo, vice president of sales and marketing for American Village Builders, agreed on the importance of windows. He recommends double-pane windows with argon and low energy-loss glazing, which he said aren't standard even on \$250,000 homes.

Gesmundo also recommends adding insulation. "You can go from eight to 14 inches and put it in yourself, and you will get a payback in two years," he said.

The National Association of Insulation Manufacturers says many new homes are not being built with enough insulation. That group says 16 inches of insulation is optimum for Michigan.

Bill Davis, a photography professor at Western Michigan University, last week had high-density polyurethane foam sprayed into the century-old house he's renovating on J Avenue.

The insulation is expensive, but is expected to save him anywhere from 30 to 50 percent in monthly energy costs, he said.

"The up-front money hurts, but it doesn't matter," Davis said. "The goal for this property is to use less or to use things that are more renewable."

According to the Sustainable Energy Authority, a fully insulated home can save up to \$300 a year in heating and cooling costs.

### **Unaffordable warmth**

Energy-saving improvements won't be an option for some people because of the expenses up front. The steep rise in home-heating costs may drive more residents and working families to ask for help.

The Salvation Army and other agencies don't know how much money they will have for this winter. That's because Congress hasn't passed the budget with federal heating assistance that it passes on to states, and because contributions customers can choose to make on energy bills aren't in yet, Almaguer said.

Last year, the Salvation Army in Kalamazoo provided 972 people with heating assistance that averaged \$312, Almaguer said. She expects significantly more demand this year.

The Kalamazoo County Community Action Bureau and Michigan Department of Human Services will also have funds available for low-income families. Heating assistance provided by DHS statewide last year amounted to more than \$54 million, for 128,000 households, according to department spokeswoman Maureen Sorbet.

The federal guideline for the Energy Assistance Program is an income of \$41,616 for a family of four. Families making more than that could turn to Consumers Energy's monthly budgeting plan to spread the winter costs throughout the year.

``What we tell folks is if they get a bill and they're going to have trouble paying it, to call us right away and we'll work with them to work out a payment schedule and work with agencies to see what kind of assistance might be available," Consumers' Holyfield said.

#### **Dangerous measures**

Turning to wood stoves, space heaters and kerosene heaters to save money could be dangerous if they're not used safely, Kalamazoo Fire Marshal Marty Myers warns.

That means loading firewood correctly, leaving about an inch gap between the logs to develop hot pockets of glowing coals. It also means inspecting the flue or chimney once a year and using dry, untreated wood.

``There's nothing wrong with (alternative sources) if they'll save you money," Myers said. ``You just have to use them properly."

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# White ribbon signifies a personal pledge Men speak out to stem violence against women

Saturday, December 3, 2005

BY SUSAN L. OPPAT

Ann Arbor News Staff Reporter

It's the promise that got Jesse Wallin involved.

When he saw a Men Against Violence Against Women poster last year pushing a white ribbon, it was something big, something demanding that brought him on board.

There are dozens of ribbons out there, pink, yellow, red, to draw attention to breast cancer, HIV-AIDS and soldiers overseas, but the white ribbon, Wallin said, is what he wants, and what men need.

It's not just a remembrance or about "awareness," Wallin said.

It's about personal accountability.

Wallin and other members of the men's group distributed 5,000 white ribbons on campus this past week, and are hosting a vigil Sunday. The ribbons are a symbol for the pledge the group encourages men to take:

"Wearing the ribbon would be a personal pledge never to commit, condone, nor remain silent about violence against women," wrote movement co-founder Michael Kaufman. The ribbons are a statement and a "challenge to those many men who may use violence against a wife, girlfriend, family member, or stranger."

It started on Dec. 6, 1989, when a 25-year-old man walked into a Montreal classroom of engineering students, let about 35 men go, announced "I hate feminists" and opened fire. Forty-five minutes later, according to the Canadian national radio and television channel CBC, 14 women were dead and 11 others wounded.

Women trying to do men's work, the shooter believed, qualified them for murder.

People memorializing the Montreal Massacre soon knotted white ribbons around their arms in remembrance.

Two years later, Kaufman's group organized and adopted the promise that goes with the white ribbon - a promise that has spread to men in the United States, Russia, Spain, Mexico, Australia, Namibia and Norway.

"Wearing the ribbon would neither be an act of contrition, nor a misplaced collective guilt, nor a pedigree that you're a great guy," Kaufman wrote a few years ago. "Rather, it would be an act of love for the women in our lives."

Wallin, 19, of Chicago, is a University of Michigan student who saw a poster during the fifth annual Ann Arbor White Ribbon campaign that told him one in every four or five college-age women will be raped or be the victim of an attempted rape. The numbers brought him up short. He's college age. His friends are college age.

Wallin said he has no personal experience with violence or sexual assault against women, but he wanted to take a stand.

"I won't remain silent about violence against women. The ribbon (a man wears) is a personal pledge for that man," he said.

Other men in the core group of about a dozen who are running the white ribbon campaign do have that personal experience, Wallin said.

A lot of men might dismiss the campaign as yet another left-wing, girlie-man effort to make half the human race out as the bad guys, Wallin said. Especially because the events leading up to the vigil included not just a petition drive but a poetry reading.

"But this is not just a touchy-feely thing," he said.

It's really a poetry slam: rhythm, motion, free verse, hip-hop, say-what-you-think, tell-your-own-story stuff.

On Friday, as Wallin handed out the ribbons, some of the men walking by shook their heads and kept moving. A few wisecracked that "I'm for violence." Any way it goes, Wallin said, "at least the topic is getting brought up in his mind."

Besides, he said, a few stopped and listened. Like he did a year ago.

"I realized this is something I can have an impact on, because I'm a man, as opposed to someone in the feminist movement," he said. "If you have your buddy, or friend, stand up against this, talk about this, holding you accountable, there's a potential for change."

Besides, Wallin said, "Something like 99 percent of domestic violence is done by men. You gotta reach out. You gotta change the men."

Susan Oppat can be reached at [soppat@annarbornews.com](mailto:soppat@annarbornews.com) or at (734) 482-1166.

# Few hear the cries of elder abuse

Web-posted Dec 4, 2005

By KORIE WILKINS  
Of The Oakland Press

For years, Denise Bryant kept the grave of her beloved aunt unmarked, hoping to buy a monument when she could prove that something positive had come of Catherine Hunt's death. A victim of elder abuse, Bryant's aunt died in 1997 at age 66 after slipping between the railings of her bed in a Detroit nursing home. It was the second time in two days that the frail, slight woman had slipped, Bryant said, this time entangling her head and neck in the rails on her bed. A girl who lost her mother at age 3, Bryant was very attached to her Aunt Catherine, whom Bryant credits with helping her get an education and grow into a successful woman with a master's degree, a husband, three children and three grandchildren.

This year, Bryant's dream of helping other senior citizens finally came to fruition with the launch of the Catherine Hunt Foundation, a nonprofit organization with offices in Detroit and Southfield that provides free and low-cost rides for people in nursing homes and housing facilities.

She also developed a standardized form so incidents of abuse could be reported and tracked.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed a law in 2003 mandating that the forms be in all nursing homes, Bryant said.

"There is a lot of good that has come from her death," said Bryant, 50, of Southfield. "It just took awhile."

Bryant had made numerous complaints about her aunt's care in the months before her death in 1997, but she learned after Hunt's death that none of the complaints had been documented. She had been filing the complaints with the staff at the nursing home.

"I didn't know where else to turn," Bryant said. "A lot of families feel that way."

Now, Bryant is an advocate against elder abuse, a growing problem that is gaining state and national attention, local experts say. Though no firm numbers are available on how many senior citizens are victims of elder abuse, the National Center on Elder Abuse says cases are increasing every year.

While there are no local statistics on elder abuse, state officials say about 80,000 people older than age 60 have been victims of elder abuse. And as the senior population increases, those numbers could rise to 100,000 victims by 2010.

The issue is hard to track because - like other abusive crimes - it often is not reported.

## ***What is elder abuse?***

Elder abuse can encompass a number of things, including physical, mental or sexual abuse, financial crimes and neglect, said Karen Carroll, communications coordinator for the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging.

The elderly are vulnerable for many reasons. They depend on others for care, meaning they might not report abuse for fear of being abandoned. And some don't have the mental or physical capacity to report abuse because they suffer from ailments such as dementia.

"Seniors are usually abused by someone they know," Carroll said.

Some national studies have indicated that about 3 to 5 percent of senior citizens have been victims of elder abuse. The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging has estimated there are about five million victims of elder abuse each year, according to the center's Web site.

As the population ages, the number of elderly residents is expected to double by 2030, said Lynn Alexander, senior citizen advocate for Oakland County. According to 2000 U.S. Census data, the number of people over age 65 increased 21 percent in Michigan. By 2010, about two million Michigan residents - 16.6 percent of the state's population - will be 65 years old or older.

"We all know there is more that needs to be done," Alexander said. "Elder abuse really impacts every family."

### ***What is being done?***

In recent years, the issue of elder abuse has gotten more attention. Oakland County has a task force on the topic that was formed last winter. Called SAVE, or Serving Adults who are Vulnerable or Elderly, the task force has sponsored forums to make senior citizens and caregivers aware of the problem. Alexander and Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Edward Sosnick are co-chairs of the task force.

The state is also reviewing Michigan law and the laws of other states regarding elder abuse. The governor created a task force in May to examine the issue. One goal of the state task force is to create a clearinghouse for complaints of elder abuse, so the exact number of victims can be tracked.

A final report must be presented to Granholm by May 31, 2006.

Diana Jones, vice president of community affairs for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, said elder abuse is slowly becoming something that's talked about openly instead of tolerated silently. And she said the issue will likely garner more and more attention in coming years.

Advocates against elder abuse say awareness of the topic is similar to where awareness was on the issue of domestic violence 20 years ago. They say elder abuse is a complicated social problem that, if left unchecked, could become a national crisis.

"As the baby boomers age, the problem will continue to grow," Jones said.

### ***Causes and concerns***

Jones said elder abuse is not a new problem, but with the population aging - and boomers finding themselves increasingly responsible for their elderly parents - incidents are rising.

There is much pressure in people's lives already, Jones said, with careers and family obligations. Adding the care of an elderly relative to the mix can send anxiety levels through the roof, she said.

"It can be very stressful," she said.

A lot of the stress can be attributed to a lack of knowledge about the elderly. Jones said those with dementia or Alzheimer's require a lot of patience and extra vigilance.

"Most caregivers aren't prepared or trained," Jones said.

Sharon Collins, department head of Frail Elderly programs for the Older Persons Commission in Rochester, said there are programs, written materials and educational talks on the topic of elder abuse at that facility. Help is available, she and others said, if people are willing to look for it.

"We've been trying to raise awareness," Collins said. "There is still that stigma because it is a form of abuse. A lot of times, the abused think they deserve it. Also, they fear repercussions."

While Collins said there haven't been many complaints of elder abuse at the commission, she said officials there do get calls from neighbors and concerned family members.

"It is out there," Collins said. "The problem is identifying it and then doing something about it."

### ***Who is victimized?***

Finding victims can be difficult, experts say. The elderly are often isolated and alone. And issues such as poor health and memory loss can make reporting difficult, if not impossible.

According to the Michigan State Police, 75 percent of elder abuse victims are women. Most, 80 percent, have annual incomes of less than \$10,000 a year.

Family members are usually the abusers and most abusers are middle-aged or older. Female family members are most likely to neglect the elderly while male family members are more likely to commit physical abuse.

A recent Oakland County case highlighted the need for more awareness and resources for caregivers.

While an exact motive was never specified, a Farmington Hills man, recently convicted of first-degree murder in the burning deaths of his elderly parents, seems to fit the profile of a male family member abuser.

Craig Cymes - who was convicted last month for the Jan. 21 deaths of Marion Cymes, 80, and Mayetta Cymes, 76 - lived with and cared for his ailing parents.

His defense attorney, Lawrence Kaluzny, said Cymes was upset by his parents' failing health and frustrated about being the sole caregiver.

### ***The future***

Activists would like to model the elder abuse awareness campaign on successful awareness campaigns such as those for domestic violence and drunken driving, Alexander said.

SAVE was recently given a \$5,000 grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan to raise awareness. It's the first time the Michigan Blues have granted funding for elder abuse under its Social Mission Health Initiatives, which focus on topics such as domestic violence and substance abuse.

Alexander said that everyone should care about elder abuse, because - as we age - we are all potential victims. She said there is a quote that says societies should be judged by how they treat their elderly. "It really speaks to our humanity," Alexander said. "And we could all find ourselves in this situation one day."

### ***For more information***

- For information on the SAVE Task Force, call (248) 858-0213.
- For information on the Michigan Task Force on Elder Abuse, visit [www.ihcs.msu.edu/elder](http://www.ihcs.msu.edu/elder).
- For help, call the 24-hour Vulnerable Adult HelpLine at (800) 996-6228.
- For information about elder abuse, visit [www.miseniors.net](http://www.miseniors.net), [www.michigan.gov/cis](http://www.michigan.gov/cis) or [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs).
- For information on the Catherine Hunt Foundation, visit [www.catherinehunt.org](http://www.catherinehunt.org) or call (866)486-8674.



## An Adoptee's World: Let the Light In

To the Editor:

Re "Your Mother Would Know," by Carol Barbieri (Op-Ed, Nov. 29), about her quest for medical information about her adopted son's biological family:

I adopted a newborn baby in California in the 1990's. My son's birth mother was required to complete a lengthy family medical history. I have almost no information about the birth father, but if necessary, I could track him down through the birth mother.

My son is being raised with the idea that when he grows up, he'll meet his birth mother and any other biological family members available to meet. There are no secrets or hidden fears. It is simply a fact of his life.

I'm sad for adoptees who grew up in a different time with secrecy and shame. **NANCY LINDEN KOPROWSKI**  
Los Angeles, Nov. 29, 2005

To the Editor:

I was adopted in New Jersey in 1953. Adoptees live their entire lives uncertain of their medical histories, and Carol Barbieri's experience brought to light the magnitude of this situation.

The search for this critical information may arise when a parent or a child is faced with a life-threatening emergency. With time constraints and legal red tape, a life can be lost.

Adoptees have no rights. Ten years ago, I located my birth mother. Her mother and grandmother both died from breast cancer in their 50's. At 53, I take breast-cancer screening and related issues very seriously.

Imagine the peace of mind that adoptees will experience if legislation allows them to obtain their original birth certificates and pertinent medical information.

**TERRI STOECKER**  
West Palm Beach, Fla.  
Dec. 1, 2005

To the Editor:

I am an adopted child of the 60's. The first question people always ask me is, "Don't you want to find out who your birth mother is?"

My answer is always the same: No!

How would my "birth mother" feel if I showed up on her doorstep more than 40 years later? I could be some big, deep, dark secret from her past that she never shared with her current family.

It's just a huge Pandora's box that we should keep the lid on.

**SUSANNE FISCHER**  
New York, Nov. 29, 2005

To the Editor:

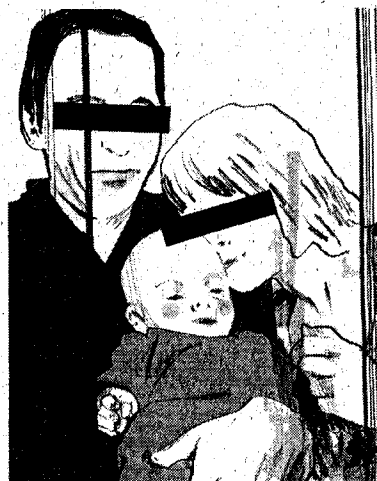
I am an adoptive father of two wonderful children, both of whom are now grown. I am fully supportive of what I feel is their absolute God-given right to know who they are and what their medical history is.

I know all about my biological family and my wife's, but they know nothing!

I hope they never have a medical emergency that requires them to know. In the meantime, why do we have to be subject to archaic laws that protect no one and hurt everyone in the adoption triad?

In this century of concern for human and civil rights, why can't someone who had no choice about being born and adopted have the same rights as everyone else? I just can't understand why politicians can't see the very simple civil rights issue at stake.

**JOHN J. CARWAY**  
Mineola, N.Y., Nov. 29, 2005



Rachel Dornm

To the Editor:

We hear painful stories every day from adoptees and birth parents about their frustrations in obtaining identifying information. Access to this basic information is the adoptee's right, and it furthers the interests of adoptees, birth parents and adoptive parents.

The New Jersey Senate's proposed legislation would permit adoptees in that state to request original copies of their birth certificate, and we are hopeful that the Assembly will follow suit. New York, meanwhile, has done nothing to address this issue and has an archaic registry system.

Without policy reform, adoptees will continue to be denied vital information concerning their future well-being and that of their families.

**KATHARINE S. LEGG**  
New York, Nov. 29, 2005

*The writer is executive director of Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children.*

# Flint woman charged with Katrina fraud

POLICE BLOTTER

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Saturday, December 03, 2005

By Marlon Vaughn

mvaughn@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6324

FLINT - A Flint woman accused of falsely claiming to be a Hurricane Katrina victim to receive assistance from the American Red Cross is facing a felony charge.

Gwendolyn Deloris Jones, 36, was charged with obtaining money under false pretenses, Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton announced Friday.

Jones allegedly received a \$1,565 check from the Red Cross after she claimed to be a recently arrived Katrina victim from Mississippi, even though she'd lived in Flint for two years.

Jones is accused of receiving the check after presenting Mississippi identification to the Red Cross.

But an anonymous phone caller reported that Jones had been living in Michigan for two years and was receiving welfare benefits - a fact that was verified with the Michigan Family Independence Agency, Leyton said.

If convicted, Jones faces up to 5 years in jail and/or a \$10,000 fine.

Published December 3, 2005

[ From the Lansing State Journal ]

## **State charities struggle to meet holiday needs Demands increase as donations fall off to nonprofit groups**

By Tim Martin  
Associated Press

Bright blue plastic dump trucks, yellow rubber ducks, wooden rocking horses and camouflaged GI Joes are piling up in a storage room the Salvation Army calls the "toy shop."

More than 2,200 Lansing-area residents - about 20 percent more than a year ago at this time - already have applied to get the toys or receive groceries this holiday season.

Michigan charities say more people have come to them for help this season because of the state's struggling economy. But donations at some charities have declined slightly or barely remained level because of donors' income worries and hurricane relief efforts that have drained the supply of available money, food and other items.

Many of the families visiting the Salvation Army's south Lansing collection site are seeking the agency's help for the first time. It's a sign of the times, said Maj. Robert Scott, leader of the agency serving Ingham, Clinton and Eaton counties.

Working poor

"We are seeing a lot of the working poor come in here," Scott said. "They may have some employment, but after paying all their bills they just don't have much left for the holidays."

The situation for Michigan charities is similar to those in many other states, according to GuideStar, a Virginia firm that researches nonprofit organizations.

"The hurricane relief efforts are a factor," said Christopher Nelson of the Michigan Association of United Ways. "But the economy is a bigger factor."

Michigan's employment picture has improved in recent months, but the state's October jobless rate - 6.1 percent - still is well above the national rate of 5 percent.

The Salvation Army's Lansing area chapter says that early season donations to its annual kettle drive have remained fairly steady compared with last year, a pleasant surprise for Scott.

"In some ways, it's too early to tell where we will wind up," Scott said. "It's not over until it's over."

The Lansing area Salvation Army has helped nearly 1,200 families pay utility bills in 2005. But another 2,000 were turned away because the program ran out of cash more than a month ago.

#### United Way efforts

United Way campaigns across the state have had mixed results.

The Capital Area United Way, centered in the Lansing area, has collected more than 90 percent of the pledges needed to reach its goal of \$5.5 million. But the agency raised about \$6 million a year in good economic times.

Food banks also have struggled to keep pace with demand across the state. Thousands of pounds of food that normally would have stayed in Michigan was diverted to the Gulf region for hurricane relief.

The diversion left some Michigan food banks with a 50 percent drop in donations in parts of September and October. Donations have bounced back, but not all the way in some regions.

Meanwhile, residents' requests for food have increased by more than 10 percent in some areas compared with last year, according to the Food Bank Council of Michigan.

"We've been leery about what the effects would be this year," council executive director Jane Marshall said. "It takes a while to get back to where we were. But the demand for our services does not stop at all."

#### Charity survey

Michigan charities said demand for their services rose in the first nine months of 2005 compared with last year, according to GuideStar, a Virginia firm that researches nonprofits nationwide.

More than 130 Michigan public charities responded to the survey.

- 68 percent said demand for services increased
- 28 percent said demand for services stayed about the same

- 5 percent said demand for services decreased
- 49 percent said contributions increased
- 29 percent said contributions remained about the same
- 22 percent said contributions decreased

Source: GuideStar

# Charity braces for busy season

By CHRISTOPHER DIEM, Mining Journal Staff Writer

MARQUETTE - With three weeks to go until Christmas, there is still plenty of time left in which to give.

And the Salvation Army in Marquette could use a boost this year, with donations down this year compared to last.

"The kettles are down a little bit. We haven't received quite as much as we normally do," said Walter Sleeter, ministry assistant at the Salvation Army. "We feel that's partially because a lot of people have already donated for the hurricanes, and we thank them for that, but we also have people here, locally, who need our help."

Sleeter picked up the gifts left under the Cheer Club Christmas tree in The Mining Journal offices on Friday. He said the gifts will be distributed from the Marquette Mall on Dec. 23 and 24 to families that signed up for the program.

Sleeter praised the Cheer Club's efforts.

"It's been a great help. Without it we couldn't do what we do," he said as he carried armloads of gifts to a truck parked outside.

Besides monetary donations, the Salvation Army accepts food, clothing, toys and teen items. Last year the organization dropped off 645 Christmas baskets and more than 9,000 gifts to local families. Sleeter hopes to deliver comparable numbers of baskets, but was unsure if the number of gifts could be matched.

"We don't have an awful lot," he said. "We're short on everything."

Donations can be dropped off until Christmas at any of the following locations: Mining Journal offices at 249 W. Washington St., Marquette; 118 E. Division St., Ishpeming and 411 Elm Ave., Room 109, Munising; the Marquette Township office at 161 County Road 492, Marquette; and the Ace Hardware Store at 193 E. M-35, Gwinn.

Cheer Club donations are divided into three sections with the Alger County Family Independence Agency in Munising distributing in Alger County; the Marquette Salvation Army handling affairs in Marquette, Gwinn, Skandia, Sawyer and Big Bay; and the Ishpeming Salvation Army servicing the west end, including L'Anse and Baraga.

Items can also be dropped off at the Marquette Salvation Army at 1009 W. Baraga Ave. or the Ishpeming Salvation Army at 222 E. Division St.

For more information on the Christmas Cheer Club, contact the Salvation Army office in Marquette at 228-2930 or in Ishpeming at 486-8121.

# Charity seeks drivers

Monday, December 05, 2005

By Elizabeth Slowik  
The Grand Rapids Press

WALKER -- Jump into your car, drive down to Santa Claus Girls headquarters, load up with gifts and practice your ho-ho-ho. Sounds easy, right?

Those with experience volunteering as one of 350 drivers needed by The Press-sponsored charity Dec. 17 to deliver gifts to 11,000 children say the job is rewarding. But it helps to plan.

First, call the Santa Claus Girls, which provides holiday gifts to Kent County children of low-income families, to put your name on the list. Volunteers must provide their driver's license number.

"It allows me a chance to actually do something to make someone's life a little more cheerful," said Ron Uzarski, a Grand Rapids real-estate agent, who has been a volunteer driver for more than five years. "The response I get from the person who has answered the door has sometimes overwhelmed me."

Ann Tank, of Grand Rapids, has delivered for about a decade and enjoys getting out into the neighborhoods and seeing the children.

"We see some joy on their faces," she said.

Plan to get in line early, said Bob Smith, who is in charge of plotting routes. The early birds get their cars in line at 6 a.m., even though the doors don't open until 8 a.m., he said.

Uzarski said while the wait takes a while, loading vehicles with gifts takes a matter of minutes, calling it a "very fast, very efficient" operation.

"Routing is similar to scheduling kids in classes," said Smith, a retired middle school principal from Grandville. "It's just a tremendous project, that we can help out kids in the Grand Rapids area that are in need at Christmastime."

Tank said she gets in line before 7 a.m., armed with coffee and The Press. She plans on a wait of 45 minutes to an hour.

Smith said it takes volunteers less than two hours to distribute the packages.

"It really helps if, when they come in, they ask for an area that is somewhat familiar to them, even though we give them a map," he said.

Uzarski recommends bringing a map. "The one I have is 30 or 40 pages and regular-sized paper. I can just flip the pages," he said.

Tank said drivers need to be flexible. "We've found often addresses may not always be where you think they are."

When making deliveries, Tank wears a Santa hat and identifies herself as a Santa Claus Girls volunteer.

Uzarski added: "A lot of people wear a Santa stocking. Some people even wear Santa Claus suits.

Delivering gifts is a good experience for children, 6 and older, Uzarski said. "It gives them appreciation of how your family is blessed."

The state Department of Human Services provides Santa Claus Girls with the names of needy families with children ages six months to 12 years.

Other low-income families with children who wish to receive gifts may call 447-9405 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Cash donations will be accepted throughout the holidays. The goal: \$165,000.

Mail contributions to Santa Claus Girls, c/o The Grand Rapids Press, 155 Michigan St. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Names of contributors will appear in The Press, so double-check for correct spellings.

To contribute by credit card, call 222-5796.



## IN BRIEF

Sunday, December 04, 2005

### Jackson Citizen Patriot

This year's Hillsdale County Toys for Tots collection is being sponsored by the Michigan State Police Jonesville Post and the Jonesville Fire Department. Consider purchasing toys for children of all ages this year, and keep in mind that if a family cannot afford to buy gifts, they most likely will not be able to purchase batteries.

Drop off new unwrapped toys in the Hillsdale area at: Alsons Corp., Big Lots, Eagle Picher Automotive on South Street by the fairgrounds, Frank Beck Chevrolet, Hillsdale College Sports Complex, Hillsdale Market House and Stillwell Ford. In the Jonesville area at: Assembly of God Church, Eagle Picher Automotive on Beck Street, Klein Tool, McDonalds, Jonesville Michigan State Police Post and Jonesville Police Department. In the Somerset Center area at Lakeshore Market. In the Litchfield area at Litchfield Police Department/village office.

The final collection date and big event will be held in the Wal-Mart parking lot from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Dec. 10. Toys will be distributed at the Assembly of God Church in Jonesville beginning Dec. 12.

# **Jingle for Jeans**

## **Help keep kids warm this winter**

December 4, 2005

Detroit Free Press Editorial

Now that Old Man Winter appears here to stay, you're breaking out the warm clothes in self-defense, and are grateful, no doubt, to have them. Not everyone does. Not everything fits. Some things are pretty worn out as they are handed down for a second or third time. There are plenty of kids in these situations right here in the Detroit area.

That's why the Free Press 70 years ago created the Ruth Alden Children's Clothing Drive. It began in 1935, when columnist Alden asked readers to sew dresses for young ladies. Updated times, and fashions, make jeans a better idea these days.

To make the most of precious dollars, the Free Press Ruth Alden fund makes discount, bulk purchases of jeans for girls. That's why we ask you, our generous readers, to contribute money instead of clothes to this effort. The jeans will be distributed in holiday packages from the Old Newsboys' Goodfellows Fund.

The year 2005 has felt like one of never-ending disaster. People may feel their generosity has been all tapped out by pleas for help for victims of the tsunami, the hurricanes, warfare, the economy. But the daily needs continue right here at home, with plenty of people struggling for the most basic things in life: food and clothing.

Please, help make a young girl's holiday season a little warmer by contributing to the Ruth Alden Children's Clothing Drive.

*To help, please send tax-deductible donations to the Ruth Alden Children's Clothing Drive, c/o Free Press Charities, P.O. Box 64704, Detroit, MI 48264-0123. For more information, contact Betty*

# **U-M fundraisers help Warm the Children**

## **Health System, med students contribute to campaign**

Sunday, December 4, 2005

BY GEOFF LARCOM  
Ann Arbor News

Sally Pobjewski baked seven batches of cookies over the Thanksgiving holiday; now they were nearly gone.

Customers at the Fourth Annual Holiday Bazaar at the University of Michigan's North Campus Administrative Complex had quickly gobbled up the cookies, whose appeal offered yet another U-M contribution to this year's fundraising for Warm The Children.

The bazaar, staged 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday by the Physician and Consumer Communications Department of the U-M Health System, is one of several ways university students and staff are generating thousands of dollars for The Ann Arbor News' Warm the Children program.

In addition to the bazaar, the Galens Medical Society, a group of U-M Medical School students and faculty, has donated \$2,000 to Warm the Children and is taking 15 families shopping this fall.

Warm the Children, sponsored by The Ann Arbor News, solicits donations from readers and others around the community. All of the money donated goes to buy clothing as The News pays all administrative costs.

The program matches families with volunteer shoppers, many from local service clubs and churches, who meet each family at a Meijer store to buy \$80 worth of winter clothing for each child.

Last year's Holiday Bazaar raised almost \$1,500. This year the group hopes to top \$2,000 in donations to Warm the Children, said Karen Burr, a physician and consumer communications client representative in the U-M Health System who helped organize the bazaar.

Each year, the event's organizing committee decides which charities to support, usually doing a different one each December. Organizers found Warm the Children after doing some online searches. The group happily supported the Hope Clinic in Ypsilanti last year.

This year's bazaar featured a variety of goodies, crafts and products.

"It's always a great charity," Burr said of Warm the Children. "You know that every dollar goes to the kids."

Pobjewski, a science writer for the U-M Medical School, said she had images of children in her mind during her cookie creation session. "I'm baking all of these cookies, and I'm seeing kids with new winter coats," she said.

This season, additional support at U-M is coming from Galens, best known for its annual fundraising tag days. The society, named after a Greek physician and philosopher, was founded about 90 years ago at U-M. Its membership of more than 100 medical students and about 15 faculty members meets monthly.

During tag days, medical students with buckets and red ponchos cover nearly every downtown corner in Ann Arbor as they raise money for various charities, including support services for patients and families at C.S. Mott Children's and Women's Hospital.

Contributors get a Galens tag, which helps students focus their efforts and eliminates the nuisance of multiple solicitations. Students were out Friday and Saturday this weekend Last year's tag days and a mail drive netted \$66,000.

Gerry DeGregoris, a third-year medical student who is coordinating Galens' shopping efforts for Warm The Children, originally heard about the program through the Notre Dame Club of Ann Arbor.

He took a family shopping several years ago, then joined a few other students last year in taking families out for clothes. This year, Galens will shop for 83 children, spread among 15 members of the club.

"It's been great for Galens," DeGregoris said of getting involved with Warm the Children. "It totally fits our mission to do what is best for kids in Washtenaw County."

Galens donations can be sent to: Galens Medical Society,  
Box F 8412, Mott Children's Hospital, 1500 East Medical Center Drive Ann Arbor, 48109.

Geoff Larcom can be reached at [glarcom@annarbornews.com](mailto:glarcom@annarbornews.com) or 734-994-6838.

TODAY

Monday, December 5, 2005

Ann Arbor News

## **SALVATION ARMY DINNER**

Call for tickets now for the dinner, set for 6 p.m. Thursday at Eastern Michigan University's McKenny Union. The Salvation Army of Washtenaw County invites you to a Christmas dinner reminiscent of a 1940s USO Club. Peter Fletcher and Lucy Anne Lance are the masters of ceremonies. Evening includes "Third Peasant From the Right" singing group, Christmas carols, a three-minute video on what the Salvation Army is doing in Washtenaw County and three awards (no speeches) to people who have helped the army through the years. Cost: \$35. For tickets, call the Salvation Army (734) 668-8353.

Published December 4, 2005  
[ From the Lansing City Community News ]

## **St. Vincent gets big donation**

By CHRISTIE BLECK  
Staff Writer

LANSING — St. Vincent Catholic Charities received an early Christmas present, and a very generous one at that.

On Nov. 23, the day before Thanksgiving, a person who wished to remain anonymous walked into St. Vincent with a donation of \$500,000 for the charity.

"It was a nice surprise," said Cheval Breggins, director of marketing and media relations for St. Vincent.

Breggins couldn't say for sure if it was the biggest gift St. Vincent had ever received, but noted, "It's probably near the top, one of the biggest."

According to the 2004 St. Vincent annual report, he said, the charity had revenues of \$11,886,000 and expenses of \$10.5 million.

Recently an anonymous donor gave \$500,000 to Resurrection School, 1527 E. Michigan Ave., which was a reprieve for the elementary school because of talk it would be closed at the end of the 2005-06 school year for budget and enrollment reasons.

Breggins did not know of the same donor made both gifts. He also said no decision had been made yet on how St. Vincent will use the extra \$500,000.

St. Vincent Catholic Charities offers services at these locations: St. Vincent Home for Children, 2828 W. Willow St., residential programs; 2800 W. Willow St., child welfare programs, adoption, foster care, intensive foster care, foster home licensing, CAIR, foster grandparents, the senior companion program, SHIELD, health care and social ministry; and the Ballentine Stepping Stones Program, 825 N. Pennsylvania Ave.

The St. Vincent mission is to "promote and enhance the quality and dignity of life by providing professional, compassionate services to individuals and families in need of emotional, physical and spiritual support."

## Prince, Janet K.

Westphalia, MI



Age 62, passed away in Lansing, December 4, 2005. Janet was born July 3, 1943 in Lansing, MI to Bernard and Ruth (nee McConnell) Ledford. She was a retired State of Michigan employee and member of the Eagle Wesleyan Chapel. Beloved wife of the late William "Bill" Prince who passed away March 16, 2003. Loving mother of Dawn (Jeff) Simons and Mark Prince both of Lansing. Grandmother of Eric Skusa, Joseph Sholl, and Shaun Prince. Sister of Ronald (LuAnn) Ledford of Gladwin. Niece of Bill and Jackie Saxon of Montana and Bill McConnell of Missouri. **A funeral service will be held Wednesday, December 7, 2005, 2:00 p.m. at Holihan-Atkin Funeral Home, Grand Ledge** with the Reverend Stephen J. Burkhart officiating. Interment to follow at North Eagle Cemetery. The family will receive friends Tuesday 6-9:00 p.m. Memorial contributions may be given to Heartland Home Health Care & Hospice 500 Cascade W. S.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49546. [www.holihanatkin.com](http://www.holihanatkin.com).